

Mr. E. Mackintosh was also appointed one of the members of the Jubilee sub-committee at the recent Jubilee committee meeting.

An effort, we hear, is being made at Hong Kong to get the shipowners in England to address a letter to the Secretary of State, assuring him that they have no objection to restrictions being placed on the Sunday working of cargoes in Hong Kong and Singapore similar to the restrictions already in force in the Australian and other British harbours in which customs dues are levied, provided such restrictions apply equally to ships of all nations and that there be reasonable provision made for cases of urgent necessity.

In another column will be found a somewhat sensational story about the arrest of an English deserter on board the *Hjemnah* at Singapore. We do not know what the law is in Singapore with regard to the status of French and German mail steamers; but we know that the ordinances in Hong Kong which gave these vessels the rights of men-of-war lapsed on the 30th April last and have not been renewed. The Postal Convention with France, on which these ordinances were based, expired at the same date. A new convention was to be framed, and pending the conclusion of the arrangement it was understood that the old convention was to remain in force for a certain term. What the length of that term was, we forget, but whether it has expired or not, we gather from the non-renewal of the ordinances that the exceptional privileges of the foreign mail steamers have now practically ceased to exist.

Another approaching marriage announced recently the following:—Mr. H. L. Lowry, surgeon, Chinese Maritime Customs Service, and Charlotte, eldest daughter of the late Mr. William Stanley, D.L., J.P., of Pombony Hall, Cumberland.

Mr. Spencer, the aeronaut, made a parachute descent at Tokio in presence of the Emperor and Empress of Japan. Everything went off satisfactorily, but Mr. Spencer was somewhat unfortunate in the place of his descent, for he alighted in the moats.

An epidemic of influenza has been prevalent in Nanking for two or three weeks past. Most of the foreign residents have suffered and a great number of natives are being attacked. It is said to be similar to the epidemic which spread over Europe and America last year.

The *Nagasaki Express* of 12th inst. says: Captain Crocker, who for the past three years has commanded H.L.M.'s gunboat *Wolf* on this station, having been relieved by Captain Helhoff, took his departure in the N.Y.K.s. *Kobe Maru* on Monday last, bound to Yokohama, en route to Germany, via the United States. As the *Kobe Maru* got under weigh at the P. & O. S. buoy, yards were manned on board the *Wolf* and a hearty cheer was given. The *Kobe Maru* afterwards backed close up to the *Wolf*, and gave those on board another opportunity of venting their feelings towards their late very popular commander. The *Wolf* left for Fusan yesterday, and we hear she will probably return here about February next, in company with the frigate *Leipzig*.

INTERVIEWERS have arrived by cable, says the *Japan Mail*, reporting another large failure in New York, the well-known importing house of John T. Walker, Son & Co. having gone under. The telegram states that more failures were pending; as it was expected that the firm named above would bring down with them. It further reports the Silk market demoralized, and in a state bordering on panic in consequence. Our merchants here, both foreign and native, who are engaged in the Silk business, are certainly entitled to our sympathy this year. Their chief market (New York) has proved a broken reed on which to lean; failure there has meant ruin, and trouble some over the suspension of the old firm of Louis's Franks & Co. last April, and now the epidemic seems to have set in once more with renewed vigour. Doubtless a more healthy trade will spring up anon, and it will be better for all concerned when the unseasoned traders are weeded out; but meanwhile, with the uncertainty with trade caused by violent fluctuations in silver, the McKinley tariff-bill, monetary stringency in London, New York, etc., our Silk friends have a hard time just now, and we wish them well through it.

THE SINGAPORE CHINESE PAPER *Lat Pau* had an article the other day about Chinese emigration to Sumatra. The Chinese in Singapore are naturally chagrined at the defection of emigration from Singapore and a good deal of the bitterness of the article is doubtless due to that feeling. According to a translation in the *Singapore Free Press*, the article says that it is reported that a certain German firm, which specifies have memorialized the Superintendent of Trade of the Southern Division, praying to be allowed to recruit labourers in Shanghai 'to proceed to Sumatra, an island opposite Singapore, for the purpose of planting tobacco, and that the Superintendent has granted the request on the condition that the terms of engagement should be the same as those that are now in progress of arrangement in Hokkien. The Editor considers this as another plot of Dutch people. He describes the oppressive government of the Netherlands Indian Colonies, the cruelty of the Estate owners, the unhealthy climate of the islands and the hardships and sufferings experienced by the labourers. He also points out that the memorialists intend to mislead the Shanghai Chinese. They state in their memorial (he continues) that labourers are required for 'Sumatra' on an island opposite Singapore, but as a matter of fact Sumatra is the general name for Deli and other such places, as Java is the general name for Padang, Sourabaya, &c. The Chinese know well that Deli is a sure road to death; therefore the memorialists make use of the name Sumatra as a means of misleading them. Sumatra is proud on the main map, and it is not to be taken for granted that the Chinese Government does not trust them, but as she is in good terms with Germany she would more likely succumb to their request if made through the Germans.

H.M.S. *Albatross*, Captain W. H. Hall, left the harbour last Friday for the Yangtze, and will probably go up as far as Wuhu, before coming down to Shanghai for the winter.

MISS GRACIE PLAISTED'S DEBUT. Miss Gracie Plaisted's popularity was attested in an emphatic and very gratifying way last night, when, on the occasion of her benefit, every seat in the Theatre Royal was occupied. The piece performed was *La Belle Bohémienne*, and although it is an opera which is not always safe to attempt with limited resources, it was on the whole very successfully presented. Strong support was given by a number of gentlemen amateurs, and an augmented orchestra under the skilful leadership of Mr. G. P. Lamert, who conducted, in the absence of Mr. Watson, helped largely towards success. That Miss Plaisted was a charming *dramatique* singer without saying, both as regards acting and singing, and it is equally unnecessary to say that she brought down the house with 'I dwell that I dream.' Mr. Harding's success as *Thaddeus* was also a foregone conclusion and his performance afforded great pleasure. The part of *Count Arden* was undertaken by Mr. D. Macdonald, an amateur who made his debut on the stage last night. Mr. Macdonald possesses a very rich baritone voice, which has been carefully trained. Being his first appearance, he had a thorough grasp of the music and he sang very effectively throughout. His voice was heard to best effect in the solo, 'The heart bowed down,' which was almost faultlessly executed. The audience testified their appreciation by loud applause. Mr. O. Lamert, who also made his first appearance as a principal in opera gave a highly creditable account of the somewhat thankless part of *Florestan*. Although not attempting to do justice to the music of the part of *Devilshoof*, Mr. L'Estrange gave a good account of the acting. Miss Jewel Deane, although not at home as the *Queen of Sheba*, did her part well. Mr. Jackson was a very satisfactory *Capitaine de la Garde*. To-morrow evening Buell's comic opera 'Les Mantes' will be given for the first time in Hong Kong, and ought to attract a large audience.

SUNDAY LABOUR IN HONGKONG HARBOUR.

The following letter has been sent by Commander Dawson, Hon. Secretary of the Missions to Seamen, to Lord Knutsford, the Secretary of State for the Colonies:—My Lord, I have the honour to enclose a copy of the *China Mail* of September 28, 1890, containing a very temperate address by the President of the Mercantile Marine Officers' Association on the working of the *China Mail* on Sundays in Hong Kong harbour, which discards the British flag and by which the officers of ships, who presented a unanimously signed petition to the Governor, are the chief sufferers. The *China Mail* from time to time states that the public opinion of the Colony is in favour of reasonable restrictions on Sunday work on board ships. The Chamber of Commerce, who are said to be opposed to such restriction as exists in the Australian and other colonies do not represent in any way either the general public opinion of Hong Kong or their own personal opinions on this matter, but acting the agents and consignees of alienated ships and merchants in England and Scotland, who would not dare to do at home what they compel their officers to do at Hong Kong.

The restrictions prayed for by seamen could do no harm to the trade of Hong Kong as there is no other port in the China Sea to which ships could so conveniently resort. Nor could such restrictions injure sailors or merchants, as they will simply do as in Australia, rise their steamships, which are the chief offenders, to arrive at Hong Kong in the beginning of the week instead of on Saturday or Sunday. Seamen ask your Lordship to enact at Hong Kong what has worked well at Bombay for eight years, where the colonies are heathen as at Hong Kong, the Bombay standing order No. 1362 of 23rd April 1882, merely altering the word 'rupees' into dollars. The order runs thus:—'Sunday working on board steamers in the harbour shall be permitted on payment, in addition to the ordinary fee at present levied, of a fee equal to one day's demurrage, subject to a minimum charge of 50 rupees and a maximum charge of 200 rupees for each ship on board of which work is carried on. Demurrage for this purpose to be calculated at the rate of 50 rupees per ton of registered tonnage.'

Voluntary action on the part of some shipowners would place them at a disadvantage in competing with rivals in trade, whether foreigners or English; so that a general measure would be fair to all alike.

With very cordial thanks to your Lordship for the very kind attention you have so freely given to this great grievance of seamen,

I have the honour, &c.

The Right Hon. Lord Knutsford, G.C.M.G., Secretary of State for the Colonies.

THE DIETARY OF VICTORIA GAOL.

Mr. Wodehouse resumed an inquiry at Victoria Gaol this afternoon into the circumstances connected with the death of a Chinese prisoner who died in the gaol hospital on the 27th ult. The inquiry was directed chiefly to the dietary of the gaol, with special reference to punishment diet of the deceased having been put on rice and water frequently and deprived of meals for infractions of the prison regulations. Mr. Marquis stated that the deceased was admitted to hospital on the 26th October, upon which date he had been on hard labour. On the 2nd the prisoner complained of diarrhoea and was prescribed for. Witness was under the impression that he saw him two days afterwards and that the prisoner said he was all right. He took no more medicine. He was sent to hospital on the 26th for observation. He looked pale but was not suffering from anything in particular. On suffering from anything in particular. On the 27th he was put on rice and water. Witness prescribed for him, and he improved for some time but died on the 27th November. The dysenteric symptoms disappeared two or three days before he died. Witness then thought him out of danger. The actual cause of death was syncope. He had several fits.

Dr. Cantlie said he had held a post-mortem on the deceased. The body and the internal organs were almost entirely destitute of fat. The heart was healthy, the lungs suffering from old-standing pleurisy; intestines bleached, the liver and spleen dark and the former reduced to about a third of its normal size, and the kidneys

were healthy. Witness was of opinion that the cause of death was exhaustion resulting from dysentery. He was of opinion that the treatment in Gaol had something to do with his death. His medical treatment was most judicious. Witness he had to do with his health. He was put on punishment diet in the form of privation of diet rendered him liable to succumb to any disease that might attack him. He was naturally fairly strong. After death he was in an extremely emaciated state. Witness attributed that to his disease. But the man was more emaciated than any witness would have expected from more dysentery of fourteen days' duration. There were indications of insufficient nourishment. Witness thought the punishment diet had something to do with the death, and was responsible for the same considerable extent. On the punishment diet of rice and water (12 oz. of rice per diem) the tissues must waste. The punishment diet would not induce dysentery directly, but would render the prisoner more liable to succumb to it if attacked. Witness had been informed by Dr. Cantlie that another man died of dysentery, and that three days before the deceased died he was apparently recovering; but that bread was served out in the regulation way to these men; the other man who got well refused his bread knowing it was not good for him to take it, while the man who died took it. Witness was not sure that the man who died was not the same man as the other man. If anything could hasten the man's death it was eating bread while in such a state. This would be quite sufficient to cause the man's death.

Luiz Flores, hospital warder, said that what Dr. Cantlie described had actually taken place. The amount of rice and water was half a pound. It was served out in the morning.

The Jury returned the following verdict:—We find that the deceased died of dysentery. We are of opinion that the deprivation of proper food, to which in our opinion the deceased was subjected, greatly aggravated the disease from which he died.

AN ENGLISH DESERTER ON THE FREIGHT MAIL IN SINGAPORE.

The *Strait Times* of 13th inst. says:—By the M. M. mail steamer *Djemnah*, which arrived at Singapore yesterday forenoon, bringing H. E. the Governor, there also came a deserter from a Queen's ship. The first information of the man being on board was given by Commander White to the S. S. *Porpoise*, who communicated with the S. S. *Porpoise*. The deserter was handed over to Sergeant Strachan, who after getting into plain clothes proceeded to the wharf, saw the steamer come in and saw all the passengers disembark, with the exception of one man, who afterwards turned out to be the man wanted. The deserter was apparently a young man of the nature of his position, an anxious passenger looking towards the shore, yet knowing that once off the steamer which flew the flag of France, he was liable to be arrested. The Sergeant saw the man's predicament, and for nearly two hours kept him under guard, while the coasted, watching every movement of the man on the *Djemnah*. At last the Sergeant saw the man come forward to the top of the gangway ladder and, holding up a letter in one hand and a dollar in the other, go through a series of gesticulations in the apparent endeavour to get one of the backery carriage drivers to take him to the shore, but he was told to post the letter, for which service the eyes would receive a gratuity of one dollar. The King's eyes, however, did not take kindly to the man's demonstration, in fact they seemed rather afraid to go near the ship. This went on for a few minutes, when the man apparently thoroughly exasperated with the delay, and with a step down the ladder. He was offered a moment to look around for any signs of danger, but only seeing a swarm of Chinese coasting parties, proceeded. Reaching the wharf, he went towards the galleys by the side of the wharf about 20 ft. away from the ship's side, and was just engaging in conversation with the spot when Sergeant Strachan emerged from his hiding place, crept up to him, tapped him on the shoulder, and in a few words gave him to understand that there was a warrant for his arrest. The words were no sooner spoken than the man became furious. The officer caught him by the arm and for a minute or so there was a desperate tussle between the two, and they gradually came nearer to the ladder leading to the ship. Assistance, however, came to hand from a marine native policeman, and seeing that resistance was useless the deserter gave in. He was taken before the Chief P. I. Officer, and finally on board the *Porpoise*, where he is at present awaiting to be sent home to be tried by the authorities for desertion.

As far as can be gathered it seems that the man was an engineer on board H. M. S. *Albatross*, and it is alleged that he repeatedly asked for his discharge, which was refused him, and so he deserted and left Europe by the *Djemnah*, where he has a brother, and would do up and offered him good employment. He informed the Sergeant when he was being taken to the *Porpoise* that at Aden and Colombo the police were on the wharves just waiting for him to go on shore, and although strongly pressed by some friends there to do so, he refrained, only to fall into a trap. Singapore. The language with which he addressed himself for this false step had better not be recorded.

CHANG CHIH TUNG'S IMPROVEMENTS IN THE NORTH. The *Wuchang correspondent* of the *N. C. Daily News* writes on the 10th inst.:—On Monday, 3rd November, there was heard for the first time on the banks of the Hui, the whistle of the locomotive which has been an impediment to so many prophecies as to the future of China. It is not to be feared that not very much is meant by the fact, but that it is a locomotive engine has been put together and has actually run along the railway at the Victoria Iron Works. A locomotive steam engine is also ready to show its wonders to a land account on the way to the choral of the Hui, where it will be the first of a new stage of progress that an engine is to be seen and examined by the natives here, and some idea gained of its powers. An ounce of sight is worth a ton of hearsay. As to the general progress of the cotton and iron works, even the seraglio of the Hui cannot escape the country's eyes. The country whose servants think that a day of half an hour for a meal makes little, and whose hostesses delay a day or two quite cheerfully to 'buy things,' now that it sets to build manufactures can't be expected to forego the delicious dalliance over detail for a few months. No doubt movement will be visible soon, even now, outside walls, drains, etc., are here and there in construction, and no doubt, if not sooner, the Chinese New Year, the season which leads to rest so many great eastern undertakings, will inaugurate general intentions into initial fact.

Your recent extract from the *Chinese Times* concerning Chang Chih-tung and Lin Ming-chuan for waste of hopes and money is only partially correct and even in applying a Western standard to Eastern statements. We must first give the credit of good intention and clear sight of an ultimate goal. We must then make allowance for want of historical knowledge and misapprehension. These wants will bring sorrow and loss; it remains to be seen how they can be damaged fatally the schemes of a determined man. Chang Chih-tung may fairly believe, from the past history of China, that his nation, *fa-tse*, the people of the Middle Kingdom, has a right to the truth that the arena of exercise is changed and that China with its heavy mental gymnastics on the stage of the Nineteenth Century is as misplaced as a veteran of the prize-fighting ring for the first time in an eight-armed outwigger. He is keen-sighted enough to see the need of a reformation, and he is not averse to prevent it. He understands that the prize-fighter will need much elementary coaching and hard training before he can row stroke with a contented crew behind him. Hence he plunges into the midst, and without weighing cost or training, with a full confidence in his own power to do great things. He is a little bit of a dreamer, but he is not another, he might thoughtfully succumb in his other scheme. As it is, the long delay with getting the actual buildings started, while a highly competent and therefore costly European staff is on the ground, the heavy drain upon the exchequer of a poor province, the many ironies of the situation, the fact that the Chinese must fight her own battles and buy her own experience. The West has reached the heights of science and moral rectitude after many a fierce battle and hardship. China will have the hardships in a different way; we prefer the more generous and sympathetic hope that the Chinese will not get into the hands of a few office men, but will have a long record of accomplishment.

THE TRANSFER OF LI HUNG-CHANG TO PEKING. The Tientsin correspondent of the *N. C. Daily News* writes on the 10th inst.:—A report of a highly important nature has found its way down from the Capital and is extensively talked about amongst the natives in the city. It is to the effect that in consequence of the very precarious state of the health of Prince Chun, the Emperor's father, it has been decided to transfer Li Hung-chang from his post as Viceroy of the Province of Szechuan, and to appoint him to the post of Minister of the Court of the Emperor. The post vacated by him will, it is said, be conferred on Liu Jui-fan, late Minister to the Court of St. James and at present Governor of the Canton Province. Some however seem to think this hardly likely, as such rapid promotion as this rarely occurs. Provincial Treasurer to Viceroy of Chihli and Guardian of the Throne has never been heard of. Prior to Liu's appointment as Minister he was Provincial Treasurer of Kiangsi; he was it is true on his return gazetted Governor of Canton, but has only recently left for his post. He is a man of high standing, and has been in the line of duty for many years. It is considered more probable that Li Hung-chang will be invited to succeed his brother, and it is urged in support of this theory that nobody but a member of the family could maintain a proper control over the province. The report of 'John Chinaman' has been the best known of foreign residents in China. In addition to his having founded a colony on the confines of the Chinese Empire his national residence in China proper number those of any other nation represented in the Middle Kingdom, and they undoubtedly hold the most conspicuous place in the foreign colony of the country. The British Minister at Peking always used to, even if he does not now, possess an influence second to none with the Chinese Ministers of the Capital. The British Consulate stationed at different ports along the sea-board and inland along the Yangtze Kiang have invariably been in the hands of a Britisher. The cause of the great success of the British in China has been the best known of foreign residents in China. In addition to his having founded a colony on the confines of the Chinese Empire his national residence in China proper number those of any other nation represented in the Middle Kingdom, and they undoubtedly hold the most conspicuous place in the foreign colony of the country. The British Minister at Peking always used to, even if he does not now, possess an influence second to none with the Chinese Ministers of the Capital. The British Consulate stationed at different ports along the sea-board and inland along the Yangtze Kiang have invariably been in the hands of a Britisher. The cause of the great success of the British in China has been the best known of foreign residents in China. 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